

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/916,316
Response dated May 17, 2004
Reply to OA of February 19, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application. An amendment is proposed canceling claim 12 without prejudice or disclaimer and amending claim 1. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-11 will be pending.

The proposed amendment to claim 1 incorporates the limitation of canceled claim 12. The scope of amended claim 1 is therefore the same as that of canceled claim 12.

The amendment to the claims is proposed without prejudice or disclaimer of the original scope of claims 1-11. Applicants reserve the right to file a continuation application for the original scope of claims 1-11.

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. (U.S. 6,274,646) in view of Ohta et al. (U.S. 5,954,866) and EP 892024.
(Office action paragraph no. 2)

Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the proposed amendment to claim 1. In the final Office action, the Examiner indicated that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In the proposed amendment, claim 1 is rewritten to have the scope of claim 12, and claim 12 is canceled. Applicants therefore submit that amended claim 1 and dependent claims 2-11 should be allowable over the cited art.

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Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. in view of Ohta et al. and EP 892024 as applied to claims 1-3, 5-8, 10 and 11 above, and further in view of Zhu (U.S. 5,889,083). (Office action paragraph no. 3)

Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the proposed amendment to claim 1. In the final Office action, the Examiner indicated that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In the proposed amendment, claim 1 is rewritten to have the scope of claim 12, and claim 12 is canceled. Applicants therefore submit that, with the amendments, claim 4 should be allowable over the cited art.

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. in view of Ohta et al. and EP 892024 as applied to claims 1-3, 5-8, 10 and 11 above, and further in view of either Sacripante et al. (U.S. 6,329,446) or Cheng et al. (U.S. 6,239,193). (Office action paragraph no. 4)

Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the proposed amendment to claim 1. In the final Office action, the Examiner indicated that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In the proposed amendment, claim 1 is rewritten to have the scope of claim 12, and claim 12 is canceled. Applicants therefore submit that, with the amendments, claim 9 should be allowable over the cited art.

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Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. in view of Ohta et al. and EP 892024 as applied to claims 1-3, 5-8, 10 and 11 above, and further in view of either Sacripante et al. (U.S. 6,329,446) or Cheng et al. (U.S. 6,239,193).
(Office action paragraph no. 4)

Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the proposed amendment to claim 1. In the final Office action, the Examiner indicated that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In the proposed amendment, claim 1 is rewritten to have the scope of claim 12, and claim 12 is canceled. Applicants therefore submit that, with the amendments, claim 9 should be allowable over the cited art.

Claim 12 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. (Office action paragraph no. 6)

In the proposed amendment, claim 1 is rewritten to have the scope of claim 12, and claim 12 is canceled. Reconsideration of the objection is respectfully requested..

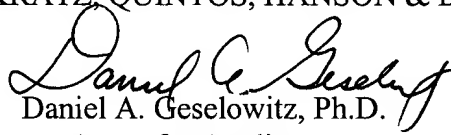
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If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned agent at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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